

FROM THE EDITORS

STARTING WITH THIS ISSUE, THE RAPA NUI JOURNAL faces a new challenge. The main scientific papers are being peer-reviewed. This is not a sudden idea from two new senior editors, but a topic that has been under discussion for some time by all the editors. This step is seen as a way to bolster scientific standards and strengthen the Journal as a forum for Pacific archaeology, anthropology and history. We have already received a good response from a number of leading scientists in archaeology and anthropology who have expressed their interest in taking on the task as reviewers for future papers. At the same time, one section of the journal will still be kept on a more informal but still informative level and serve as a platform for different reflections on what is "going on" in Rapa Nui and other Pacific Islands. This section will also include shorter communications and reports.

RNJ will continue as the main journal for Rapa Nui research, but we will also accept a wider range of papers concerning research on other Pacific Islands, including Micronesia and Melanesia. Each issue will have an editorial where we take the opportunity to reflect on current research issues, both in a general way and from a "Pacific" point of view.

This issue of RNJ includes three papers covering research questions from both East and West Polynesia. Robert Bollt, University of Hawai'i, describes and discusses a recently excavated tiki pendant from the island of Rurutu, French Polynesia; Ernest "Quent" Winterhoff, University of Oregon, takes an experimental perspective concerning basalt adze use and exchange and applies it in a West Polynesian context. Paul Horley of the Yuri Fedkovych Chernivsk National University, Ukraine, continues the discussion on the *rongorongo* script of Rapa Nui, this time with the aid of statistical analysis.

Based on the topics of the papers from Winterhoff and Horley, we raise the question of why statistical methods and experimental archaeology are important to research. The so-called 'New Archaeology', formulated by Lewis Binford (1962), was a reaction against traditional culture-historical archaeology. In New Archaeology, methods became the solution; they were used to calculate and thereby understand prehistoric events, and the outcome of the method became the answer to what happened in the past.

The post-processual reaction against this view has mainly resulted in an archaeology more or less revealed from (statistical) methods but also supported by structuralist views. Within the post-processual sphere of research it has been commonly stated that it is impossible to calculate what happened in the past by quantifying the material remains since all past activity is in the hands of the present. We suggest here that statistical methods can and should be implemented. We see ways to move beyond the processual and post-processual views where methods can be used to produce new hypotheses, and answer questions about what the studied material remains may reflect, and not provide a simple answer about past relations.

Experimental archaeology is certainly a productive way of creating new information of great value and adding to the

understanding of how things might have worked in the past. Such tests can be refined and repeated (in the present). You can experimentally make a stone adze and experimentally cut a tree with it. You can build a Polynesian double canoe and sail it by the stars and thereby learn by the experience. Such knowledge can never be attained at a desk!

If we use statistical methods and experiments as tools to produce new knowledge and hypotheses about past relations which we bring with us into the research and the excavation event, we could be on our way to a "new post-processual" archaeology. The post-processual reaction against this view, mainly expressed by Ian Hodder (1986) and Shanks and Tilley (1987), has in many ways resulted in an archaeology more or less revealed from statistical methods, but also supported by structuralist views.

Within the post-processual sphere of research, it has been commonly stated that it is impossible to calculate what happened in the past by quantifying material remains: "interpretation cannot be reduced to a methodology," as Shanks and Tilley (1987:27) expressed it. Thus, since all past activities are in the hands of the present or, as the same authors formulate it, "The past, then, is gone; it can't be recaptured in itself, relived as object. It only exists now in its connection with the present, in the present's practice of interpretation" (Shanks and Tilley 1987:26).

Therefore, we also suggest that statistical methods can and should be used in present-day practice. We see ways to move beyond the processual and post-processual views, where methods can be seen to produce new hypotheses and questions of what the studied material remains might reflect.

This can be a way to reach an archaeology that combines a general processual thinking with individual post-processual ideas. To be able to do this we suggest that we must agree that statistical methods and experiments never really can capture the "truth" about prehistoric relations, but they should be seen as useful tools in helping us to create new hypotheses for the ongoing archaeological discourse.

Experimental archaeology is a productive way of generating new information of value for the understanding of how things might have worked in the past. Such tests can also be refined and repeated (in the present).

Paul Wallin and Helene Martinsson-Wallin
Senior Editors, RNJ

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RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE AUSTRALS are somewhat rare, as is the literature on the subject, although recently we published a book about Ra'ivavae, another of the Austral islands (*Ra'ivavae* by Edmundo Edwards, 2003). While the art and iconography of the Australs has been mentioned in art books about the Pacific, little is known about the meaning of the few pieces that survived massive destruction by converts to Christianity. Rob Bollt, of the University of Hawai'i, whose dissertation fieldwork was conducted on Rurutu, Austral Islands in 2003, made a spectacular "find" – a tiki pendant – uncovered from a *marae* on the island of Rurutu. It is the only carved Austral ornament from the Classic period ever to be excavated archaeologically. The Rurutu pendant appears to have been a high-status item and likely was a part of a more complicated piece. Bollt's next project, also in the Austral Islands, will begin in 2006.

ERNEST HAROLD WINTERHOFF V is currently in the field, working on his dissertation research (University of Oregon). Known to his friends as Quent, his research focuses on Geochemical Techniques, Exchange and Trade, Stone Tool Production, and Samoa Culture History. He has worked and studied in Polynesia and Micronesia, and is a Project Leader for the Museum of Natural and Cultural History at the University of Oregon. His undergraduate work was done at Ohio University.

ANOTHER OF OUR FEATURED AUTHORS, Paul Horley, is already familiar to readers of RNJ because of his contribution to Vol. 18(2), October 2004, when we published his translation of Urey Lisjanskij's *Travel Round the World Onboard the ship Neva* (pp. 118-125). He is also the artist who contributed finely-detailed drawings of Easter Island's petroglyphs for our notecard series. We wondered how Horley made it from his homeland in the Ukraine to Easter Island, and so he sent us the following odyssey, one that sounds familiar to those of us who were first inspired by Heyerdahl's *Aku Aku*. Paul wrote, "When I was about age ten, I read Heyerdahl's *Aku-Aku*. It fascinated me completely: the stories of the solitary island with its hundreds of huge stone statues with elongated faces, deep dark caves, and mysterious inscriptions – it was so intriguing! Later I attended art school and, from that time, I still have old drawings of *moai*, made after *Aku-Aku* photographs, as well as about a dozen small *moai* replicas made of clay. The years passed and, when I was working on a solar cell research project in Mexico, I returned to my childhood dream – to visit the enchanted island. I read as much as I could find on the Internet and ordered *An Uncommon Guide to Easter Island* from Antoinette, and finally – that was fantastic! – one warm November evening I stepped off the plane at Mataverí airport. I can't explain it – it was as if I were dreaming – the girls saluting the newcomers with *Iorana*, a solemn choir of cycadae, and a distant murmuring of the ocean, licking the shores of the Navel of the World. The nine full days I spent there passed as if in a fairy tale, leaving charming memories of the island, the kind open-hearted Rapa Nui people, and the unique archaeological heritage of the island. After I returned home, I began to gather my own Easter Island library, trying to learn more and to find the answers to the questions, and hoping to better understand what I had seen there. I decided to

do some research and, as my field of study is in the areas of computational and statistical physics, I thought about two possible subjects, both very interesting to me and where I could apply my mathematical and programming skills. One was the modeling of *moai* transport; the other, a statistical analysis of *rongorongo* script. After reading about the numerous experimental approaches to solve the first problem by various authors, I decided to focus on the script. And, after more than two years of intensive work, I submitted my paper to RNJ."

A REPORT ON AN ON-GOING RESEARCH project, by Thegn Ladefoged, Christopher Stevenson, Peter Vitousek, and Oliver Chadwick, is titled *Soil Nutrient Depletion and the Collapse of Rapa Nui Society*. This "breaking news" report concerns innovative gardening techniques used by the Rapanui to enhance soil nutrient levels, in response to a challenging environment. The authors are developing laboratory procedures to evaluate the importance of nutrients and to study the problems that contributed to the decline of the pre-contact society. Ladefoged, from the University of Auckland, is well known to our readers, as is Stevenson. We welcome Peter Vitousek, from Stanford University, and Oliver Chadwick from UCSB; both of whom are new to *Rapa Nui Journal* readers. Peter Vitousek is an ecologist in the Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University. His research uses natural and agricultural ecosystems of the Hawaiian Islands as a model system for understanding the maintenance of soil fertility and plant productivity on long time scales. Chadwick is a soil scientist in the Department of Geography, UCSB. His interests include developing chemical and isotopic tracers to determine soil formations. He has worked extensively in the Hawaiian Islands with Ladefoged and others, studying the role of soil nutrients and their role in Polynesian agriculture.

OUR GETTING TO KNOW YOU feature for this issue focuses on Christopher Stevenson, a familiar name to Rapanuiphiles. Chris' Easter Island projects deal with the less glamorous facets of the ancient society; instead of statues, he studies flakes of obsidian; instead of monumental *ahu*, he concentrates on earth ovens and stone mulch. These are the nuts-and-bolts of archaeology and they can tell us much about the past.

A SHORT NOTE BY GEORGIA LEE considers the question of the authenticity of stone statuettes from Easter Island. Items said to be "ancient" pieces from the island often are offered for sale, and a recent eBay item, a small carved stone figure, led to a comparison to some undeniably authentic pieces from the island, previously unpublished.

SIDSEL MILLERSTROM CONTRIBUTES A REPORT concerning an unusual petroglyph from the Marquesas Islands. Sidsel, who has worked extensively in the Marquesas, Tahiti, and Hawai'i, documenting petroglyphs and excavating sites, got her start in archaeology while working with Georgia Lee's petroglyph project on Rapa Nui. She went on from there with her own research projects. Sidsel is associated with the Archaeological Research Facility, Oceanic Archaeology Lab, University of California, Berkeley; she will be working at a site in November on the island of Maui with Patrick Kirch.

OUR LOOK BACK FEATURE for this issue is the "Diary of a Cadet on the Warship La Flore, 1872" by Pierre Loti. Translated by Ann M. Altman, Ph.D., this is a delightful description of Easter Island from those early years. Less factual than some writers, he romantically describes the wind and the smells, the views and the colors. He was also a gifted artist. Loti (a pseudonym: his real name was Louis Marie Julien Viaud) went on to write many books and stories and was considered one of the most original of the French writers of the 2nd half of the 19th century.

This description, along with those of Eyraud and Pinart, have been published in one volume, *Early Visitors to Easter Island*, available from the EIF.

Ann M. Altman also translated *Easter Island and Its Mysteries* by Dr. Stéphen Chauvet, published in Paris in 1935. This is now available, with all illustrations, on the internet at <<http://www.chauvet-translation.com>>

Although Chauvet never visited the island, he was obsessed by it. As a medical doctor, he assumed that the *moai kavakava* (wood carved skeletal figures) indicated that the Rapanui islanders had some dread disease, probably aggravated by "drinking seawater". His "take" on things Rapanui is very much off the mark, and very much a "period piece". His book was self-published, as is clear from his original bibliography; the many errors indicate that he did not have an editor, resulting in some very humorous entries: Jack Cook (for Captain James Cook). Readers beware!

THIS ISSUE OF RNJ also contains an interesting update on the search for the lost ships and crew of La Pérouse, missing since they sailed out of Botany Bay, Australia, in 1788. Ruins of his two ships have been explored since 1981 when wreckage was discovered at Vanikoro, in the southern Solomon Islands. Divers have found artifacts and skeletons, and excavations on the island have uncovered many items from the two wrecks. The excavations continue; researchers hope to discover if any of the crew survived to build a small boat and try to escape from the island.

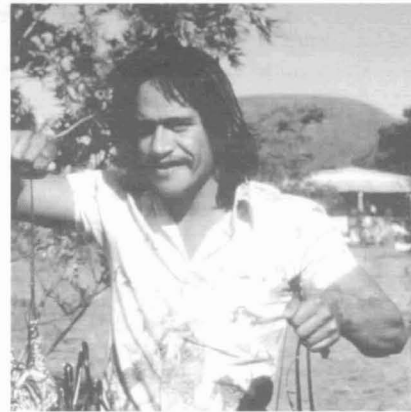
WE THANK CHRISTINA HELLMICH, Associate Curator of Oceanic Art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, for her review of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's new exhibit of Marquesan art. The Met's museum catalog is also reviewed in this issue (See Reviews).

A LOT OF NEWS FROM HANGAROA is in this issue, and not all of it is positive. A disturbing incident of vandalism has occurred, plans are afoot for upscale hotels and, of all things, gambling casinos. New laws are being proposed for the island, one of which will prevent Chileans from moving to the island without special permission; and one that provides autonomy for Rapa Nui. It is amazing that this little island can generate so much activity, anger, angst, and controversy.

On a brighter note, we are happy to announce that one of RNJ's new correspondents is Mahina Tea Pakomio, a Rapanui islander who is studying journalism in Santiago. Mahina, daughter of Uri Pakomio Paoa, is a 3rd year journalism major at the Universidad Santo Tomás. She graduates in two years and hopes to return to the island, working in the field of journalism. This issue contains her first report for RNJ, on the

subject of the proposed gambling casinos on Rapa Nui. Welcome, Mahina! We look forward to receiving your notices and essays.

WE ARE SAD TO REPORT THAT SERGIO (KIO) TEAO ATAN, a well-known and well-loved musician, composer, singer, painter, and diver, died in a diving accident. His funeral Mass and burial were attended by the majority of the island's population, with many Rapanui remaining at the grave site for several hours, singing favorite songs written by Kio. It was a difficult goodbye. Kio's distinctive voice and talents will be missed. His music and his lyrics will linger on.



Kio Teao in 1982.

THE VII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EASTER ISLAND AND THE PACIFIC

The VII International Conference on Easter Island and the Pacific is scheduled for August 21-25, 2007 in the medieval city of Visby (a World Heritage city) located on the Island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea, Sweden. The sponsors of the conference will be Gotland University and the Easter Island Foundation. Co-chairmen are Helene Martinsson-Wallin, Paul Wallin and Christopher M. Stevenson.

As currently configured, the conference will host two featured speakers. The first will be the Opening Speaker, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, former Samoan prime minister and current deputy head of state, Samoa, who will present opening remarks. The second special event will be a lecture given by Featured Speaker, Dr. John Flenley of Massey University, New Zealand. The title of his talk is "A palynologist looks at the colonization of the Pacific." We will set aside one-hour, non-competing sessions for these presentations.

Key researchers in the field of Oceanic and Polynesian studies will chair various sessions. Suggested sessions at this time include: Easter Island Archaeology; Easter Island Anthropology and Traditional History; Archaeology in East Polynesia; Archaeology in West Polynesia; Archaeology in Micronesia, Melanesia, and South East Asia; Pacific Island Osteology; Pacific Arts, Literature and Language; Cultural Heritage – International Perspectives; Migration Strategies and Traditional Navigation in Island Communities; Identity Matters: Movement and Place, Islands and Islanders; Current Theories and Methods in Pacific Island Archaeology and a

General Session. These sessions will be modified as time goes on, but they provide the general framework for the conference. We are open for additional suggestions at this time. A special workshop for students and young scholars is also planned with participants from three World Heritage Islands (Rapa Nui, Gotland, and Zanzibar), as well as a Poster Session.

The venue for the meetings will be Gotland University, with its new university building, located in the old harbor area of the city. Here are all the facilities needed, including well-equipped auditoriums, seminar rooms, meeting rooms, lunch/restaurant, coffee shops, etc. Other localities that will be used for the inauguration and general meetings include the beautiful main hall (the Picture Stone Hall) of the County Museum, and a new Congress Hall that is currently under construction (and promised to be ready in May 2007).

There are numerous alternatives for accommodations, ranging from hostels to fine hotels. Prices range from around \$40US per person per night at the hostels to around \$250 US for a double room/night at the upscale and luxurious Wisby Hotel. All accommodations are within 2-10 minutes walk from the University.

Because we will be living at different hotels, the student house called "Rindi" will be transformed into a meeting place at night, plus there is a wide range of available pubs in the area for informal meetings.

A one-day mid-conference excursion in the city of Gotland will be arranged. This will provide a good view into the island's rich prehistory, ranging from the Stone Age to the Viking Period. Pre- and post-conference tours in the medieval city of Visby will be arranged. Also being planned is a post-conference bus tour that will travel from Gotland to Oslo. This tour will take about three days and it will include selected pre-historic sites along the way to Oslo, including the Regal ship *Wasa* in Stockholm, and the Vitlycke rock carvings in Western Sweden—another World Heritage site.

The tour will end with a visit to the Kon-Tiki Museum. Prices for these trips will be calculated and presented in more detail in the next issue of RNJ.

Abstracts of papers to be presented at the conference should be submitted before May 1, 2007 (more details about content and formatting guidelines will be forthcoming). As usual, each presentation must not be more than 20 minutes in length. Slide projector, Powerpoint, overhead and digital projectors will be provided to facilitate your presentation.

We urge you to take this unique opportunity to combine the great prehistory of Gotland and Rapa Nui – and other small islands. After all, islands are islands...

Paul Wallin; Helene Martinsson-Wallin